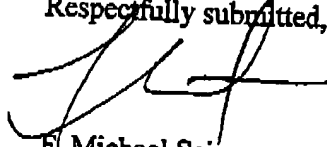


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In view of the foregoing amendments, Applicants respectfully request the issuance of a Notice of Allowance forthwith. Any questions that the Examiner may have regarding this correspondence can be directed to the undersigned who may be reached at (919) 854-1400.

Respectfully submitted,



F. Michael Sajovec
Registration No. 31,793

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20792

PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, Washington, DC 20231, on March 20, 2002.

Monica L. Croom